

**CLAIMS:**

1. An encoding method applied to a video sequence corresponding to successive scenes subdivided into successive video object planes (VOPs) and generating, for coding all the video objects of said scenes, a coded bitstream constituted of encoded video data in which each data item is described by means of a bitstream syntax allowing to recognize and decode  
5 all the elements of the content of said bitstream, said content being described in terms of separate channels, said method being further characterized in that said syntax comprises specific information indicating at a high description level in said coded bitstream the presence, or not, of various additional channels that can be encountered to describe the content of said bitstream.

0 2. A method according to claim 1, in which said specific information consists of the following additional syntactic elements:

video\_object\_layer\_shape : 1 bit

number\_of\_video\_object\_layer\_additional\_channel\_descriptions : n bits

5 video\_object\_layer\_additional\_channels [i] : 1 bit

the first element indicating the presence, or not, of a contour or shape channel that should then be decoded, the second one representing the number of additional channel syntax elements present in the coded bitstream in order to describe the content of said bitstream, and the third one identifying the presence, or not, of the channel addressed by the value [i], i  
0 taking a value between 0 and  $2^n - 1$ .

3. A method according to claim 1, in which said specific information consists of the following additional syntactic elements:

video\_object\_layer\_shape : 1 bit

5 number\_of\_video\_object\_layer\_additional\_channel\_presence : n bits

video\_object\_layer\_additional\_channels [i] 1 bit

the first element indicating the presence, or not, of a contour or shape channel that should then be decoded, the second one representing the number of additional channels present in

the coded bitstream, and the third one identifying the presence, or not, of the channel addressed by the value [i], i taking a value between 0 and  $2^n-1$ .

4. A method according to claim 1, in which said specific information consists of  
5 the following additional syntactic elements:

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| video_object_layer_shape :                 | 1 bit                        |
| video_object_layer_additional_channels [i] | 1 bit, $0 \leq i \leq 2^n-1$ |

the first element indicating the presence, or not, of a contour or shape channel that should then be decoded, and the second one identifying the presence, or not, of the channel  
10 addressed by the value [i], i taking a value between 0 and  $2^n-1$ .

5. A method according to anyone of claims 2 to 4, characterized in that the video\_object\_layer\_shape syntactic element is not provided in the bitstream.

6. A device for encoding a video sequence corresponding to successive scenes subdivided into successive video object planes (VOPs), said device comprising means for structuring each scene of said sequence as a composition of video objects (VOs), means for coding the shape, the motion and the texture of each of said VOs, and means for multiplexing the coded elementary streams thus obtained into a single coded bitstream constituted of encoded video data in which each data item is described by means of a bitstream syntax allowing to recognize and decode all the elements of the content of said bitstream, said content being described in terms of separate channels, said device being further characterized in that it also comprises means for introducing into said coded bitstream specific information indicating at a high description level in said coded bitstream the presence, or not, of various additional channels that can be encountered to describe the content of said bitstream.

7. A transmittable video signal consisting of a coded bitstream generated by an encoding method applied to a video sequence corresponding to successive scenes subdivided into successive video object planes (VOPs), said coded bitstream, generated for coding all the video objects of said scenes, being constituted of encoded video data in which each data item is described by means of a bitstream syntax allowing to recognize and decode all the elements of the content of said bitstream, said content being described in terms of separate channels, said signal being further characterized in that said coded bitstream also comprises specific information indicating at a high description level in said coded bitstream the

presence, or not, of various additional channels that can be encountered to describe the content of said bitstream.

8. A device for receiving and decoding a video signal consisting of a coded bitstream generated by an encoding method applied to a video sequence corresponding to successive scenes subdivided into successive video object planes (VOPs), said coded bitstream, generated for coding all the video objects of said scenes, being constituted of encoded video data in which each data item is described by means of a bitstream syntax allowing to recognize and decode all the elements of the content of said bitstream, said content being described in terms of separate channels, said coded bitstream moreover comprising specific information indicating at a high description level in said coded bitstream the presence, or not, of various additional channels that can be encountered to describe the content of said bitstream.